The Ill Effects of Television

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In the name of Allaah the beneficiary, the merciful, all praise is due to Allaah. We seek his aid and ask him for guidance and ask his forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allaah from the evil of ourselves and our wicked actions.
Whoever Allaah guides, none can send astray and whoever Allaah sends astray, none can guide. We testify that there is no God but Allaah alone and that we has no partner, and l testify that Muhammed is his servant and messenger. May Allaah bless him, his family and his companions.
We ask Allaah subhanahu wa ta'ala to accept our efforts, overlook our shortcomings and cover us all with his mercy in this world and in the next.
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TELEVISION [This appendix is a summary, with slight changes, of an excellent and enlightening book entitled Television and the Institution of Photography or Picture-Making, published by the Majlis al-Ulama, of South Africa.]

Introduction

The great need for discussion of the Islaamic perspective concerning the issue of television is clear to us all. Since television has entered the homes of people in every corner of the earth. the rich and the poor, the educated and en-educated,

Muslim and non-Muslim - it has become a necessity to address the issue and explain the problems and dangers of television in a clear and concise manner for the benefit of every Muslim who is seeking to please Allaah, the Most High, and earn His reward.

The Definition of Television

The Encyclopedia Brittanica defines television as follows: The electrical transmission of pictures in motion and the simultaneous electrical transmission of the accompanying sounds. The Encyclopedia International explains television as: The unique feature that distinguishes television from radio is the conversion of an image into an electrical current which is later reconverted to the original image...

The Working of Television

The equipment consists of a camera which convex the image into electrical impulses; these are transmitted by radio to a receiver which converts the impulses by means of a cathode-ray tube into a corresponding image on a screen.

The Image

The illusion of motion in television is produced by showing 30 still pictures, or frames, each second. Through persistence of vision the brain retains each picture until the next comes along. We are not aware of the fact that our eyes are really seeing a rapidly changing sequence of a large number of slightly different still pictures. Each still picture consists of about 250 000 picture dots of varying brightness which appear as if painted on the screen. This process is called scanning. (Encyclopedia International) (For an interesting and comprehensive discussion of the technical functioning of Television, refer to the original book: (Television and the Institution of Photography or Picture-making.) It should at this juncture be said that the undesirability and the Islaamic prohibition of this institution of television is not based solely on the stand that photography (picture-milking) of animate objects is employed. Without minimizing the importance and the decisiveness of the prohibitory factor of picture-making it has to be said that a number of other evil and un-Islaamic factors accompany the institution of television. It is this conglomeration of evil factors which make television illegal in Islaam although, in most cues, each single one of these factors is sufficient to secure the verdict of illegality of TV. Insha'Allaah, we shall outline these prohibitory factors (Asbaabul Hurmat) of television in the ensuing pages.

Picture-Making The Mother of Television

Photography which is merely a method of picture-making is the actual basis of TV. Without the institution of photography television is not possible. Whether shows are "live" or otherwise, the institution of photography is employed. Now,

according to the Law of Islaam picture-making of animate objects is severely criticized and banned.

Music and Television

We can consider music as an integral part of television programs. No TV show is complete without music. Islaam has forbidden music in no unmistaken terms (For further details and full discussion of the evidences concerning the prohibition of Music in Islaam, refer to: The Islaamic Ruling of Music and Singing, by Abu Bilal Mustafah al-Kanadi). For the purposes of the present subject it will suffice to state that Islaam categorically forbids all types of music. Music in Islaam is regarded as a Kabirah (great) sin. With regard to music our Prophet (may the blessings of Allaah and peace be upon him) said:

"There will be men from among my Ummah who will consume alcohol, giving it another name (so as to deceive themselves and others). Singing girls and musical instruments will be playing to them. Allaah, Ta 'ala will cause the earth to swallow them. Allaah will transform them into apes and swine." (Ibn Maajah, al-Bayhaqee 10/221, no. 20989. Al-Albaanee declared it to be authentic in Silsilat Saheehah 1/136-139, no. 90)

It is reported from Abdullah ibn Mas'ood (May Allaah be pleased with him): "Music sows hypocrisy in the heart like water causes seeds to grow in soil" (Ad-Durru al-Manthoor, by As-Suyootee 5/307-308, explanation of verse 31:6 of the Qur'aan) Allaah says in the Qur'aan:

"And when they (the believers) hear what is futile they turn away from it, and they say Unto us our deeds; and, unto you your deeds. Peace upon you. We do not follow the ignorant ones." (Al-Qur'aan 28:55)

The Female Voice

The female voice, according to Islaam, is also included in the category of Satar, i.e. it has to be 'concealed' and not 'revealed' . Since the female voice is an entity not to be displayed or advertised, it is not permissible for males to listen to women singing or even reciting the Qur'aan...

When necessity demands that they have to speak to males then their speech should not be attractive, gentle and alluring like the deliberate allure put in speech by (trained' women of the disbelievers. Recognizing the danger of allurement in the female voice. the Qur'aan commands women thus:

"And, do not speak in alluring tones, so that he in whose heart there is a disease (of lust) desires." (Al-Qur'aan 33:32)

Van de Velde in his book Ideal Marriage, states: "The tone-color of a voice, and the intonation of a single word -- and it may be a word of no special meaning or

association in itself - may excite incredible intensity of desire. The unique and precious significance that a woman's voice can give to to "you" can suffice to overwhelm man's power of endurance and control ... "

Islaam has, hence, forbidden its women to speak in a soft or "sexually" sweet tone. If anyone is aware of the springs of sex-psychology he will clearly see the justification for Islaam's restriction in this matter.

Islaam commands the concealment of the female voice and prohibits its display in public. but television demands the contrary. Great use is made of the female voice on TV to advertise, to allure, to excite lust and female singing with the accompaniment of music is most popular ...

The importance of television programs, like the importance of all the mass media of the disbelievers, hinges on maximum exhibition of the female body and the female voice which have been subverted by the bestial culture of the unbelievers, to pamper the inordinate sexual desires of men who have no belief of Allaah in them -- of men who have no fear of Allaah left in them.

Serials, Romances and Stories on Television

What is Islaam's attitude to fiction, novels and romantic stories'? Allaah Ta'ala says in the Qur'aan:

"And among mankind are those who purchase idle tales so as to lead astray (others) from the Path of Allaah. And, they make a mockery of the Laws of Allaah. To them, there is a disgraceful punishment. And, when our verses are rehearsed to them they turn away in pride as if they did not hear, as if there are are plugs in their ears. Give them the news of a painful punishment." (Qur'aan 31:67)

These verses of the Qur'aan were revealed to prohibit, according to the Mufassireen and Jurists, music and the stories of romances imported from Persia. Since these things divert man's attention from the remembrance of Allaah and transport one into the realm of illusion and imagination the Qur'aan outlaws them. Islaam strongly discourages fiction and encourages one to live in reality and not in illusion which has the tendency to make one negligent and forgetful of the prime purpose of man's creation which is to gain Allaah's Pleasure by fixing the gaze on the Akhirat (Hereafter) and not on the 'IV screen. Islaam, therefore forbids the wasting of time in listening to idle tales and fiction or false stories.

Nudity, Immorality and Television

The most glaring evil propagated by the television media of the world is the crime of nudity and sexual immorality. Commercialized nudity and sexual immorality under the camouflage of "educational" pictures are accepted and necessary

features of world television. The Western world is haunted by the obsession of illicit sex, and it is this carnal obsession of illicit sex coupled with the unbeliever's god of materialism which makes capital of the female body on TV as well as all other mass media.

The Islaamic concept of morality and modesty is the very antithesis of the immorality and passivity dished out to the world via TV. Islaam demands the concealment of the female body. The Messenger of Allaah (may the blessings of Allaah and peace be upon him) said: *"Woman is an object of concealment."* (Tirmidhee. It was declared authentic by al-Albaanee in Saheeh Sunan at-Tirmidhee 1/343 no. 1189)

TV is an institution which is widely used to exhibit the female body. Islaam has banned all forms of immorality and immodesty, but TV exhibits immodesty and immorality in their crudest forms by depicting the actual sex acts and, above all, it audaciously and shamelessly passes these off as "educational". Television as a prime agent of immorality is very well known...

The Messenger of Allaah (may the blessings of Allaah and peace be upon him) said: *"Shamelessness (immodesty) is vice, and vice will be in the fire."* (Muslim 4/1375, no. 6309)

Television As An Agent of Zina (Fornication)

Allaah Ta'ala says in the Qur'aan: **"And come not near to zina."** (Al-Qur'aan 17:32)

The terms, come not near, means: stay away from all such things and practice: which lead to zina - which are stepping-stones to fornication.

All practices, things and institutions which aid and foster fornication and immodesty are forbidden by Islaam. There are different categories of this abominable crime of zina. The Messenger of Allaah (may the blessings of Allaah and peace be upon him) said:

"The zina of the eyes is the gaze (at that which is unlawful, e.g. nudity); the zina of the ears is to listen (to talks of nudity which excites the carnal desired); the zina of the tongue is to speak (what is evil); the zina of the hand is to touch (the female which is unlawful to you); the zina of the feet is to walk (towards immorality); the zina of the heart is to desire (what is unlawful), and it is the private parts which either commits or shuns the actual act of fornication." (Muslim 4/1397 no. 6421, 6422)

In this Hadith the Messenger of Allaah (may the blessings of Allaah and peace be upon him) speaks of the zina committed by the various parts of the human body. Thus, to look at the nudity and evil portrayed on the television screen constitutes

the zina of the eyes. To listen to the immodest and illicit sex elks of the television is zina of the ears. Lust which is loused by the display, discussion of nudity and passivity and perversion on the TV screen constitutes the zina of the heart. Television, therefore, is without any doubt a powerful agent and a stepping-stone for fornication...

We find today the whole family - father, mother, sons and daughters - sitting huddled together around the TV screen. Together, in a display of stark shamelessness, the whole family is committing zina of the eyes, zina of the ears and zina of the heart, and Allaah alone knows how many multitudes of men and women indulged in the final act of fornication as a result of watching and being aroused by the evil on the TV screen...

Islaam lays great emphasis on modesty, so much so, that our Prophet (may blessings of Allaah and peace be upon him) said: *"Modesty is a part of lmaan (Faith)."* (At-Tirmidhee. It was declared authentic by al-Albaanee in Saheeh Sunan at-Tirmidhee, 2/195, no. 2094 (1634))

But TV with its emphasis on illicit, depraved and bestial immorality is the very negation of the Islaamic concept of modesty and shame. Mother, father and children together viewing the zina -- the fornication and vice on the TV screen. What is now left of humanity? May Allaah Ta'ala protect us and our children from the 51th and depravity of the Western world sunk in perversion and immorality.

Allaah Ta'ala says: **"Today (the Day of Qiyamah) we shall seal their enoughs -- and, their hands shall speak (the evil they committed); and their feet will bear evidence as to what they practiced."** (Al-Qur'aan 36:65)

TV in Stride - Terror of Copy Rapes

The horror of a TV rape came true for two women. They were attacked only days after the screening of a documentary "Cry Rape" on British TV.

The maniac who broke into their homes at Reading, Berkshire, acted just like the TV rapist.

He struck by day, threatening his victims with a knife. He robbed them and stacked his loot in a neat pile ready for a quick getaway. The police chief leading the hunt for the rapist said: "He may have seen this program. It could have stimulated these attacks." Now police may ask ITV for a private screening of the film to seek possible new clues. (Sunday Times, 8th February, 1976)

Television and Crime in General

Television besides being a powerful agent of immorality, generally fosters various types of crime. Violence, aggression, robberies, murder, etc., are crimes which the young readily learn from TV shows. Much of the delinquency and youth crimes being perpetrated in the Western world could be traced to the TV.

In an article entitled: TV Shows Blamed For Crimes. Los Angeles judge, Mark Bridler, blasted a TV crime show recently as the cause of a "seven-hour nightmare" in which two teenagers taped shotguns to the heads of hostages and extracted a huge ransom from a Californian bank.

Television Encourages Acceptance of Aggression

The regular and continous shows of violence and aggression slowly, but most certainly, claim their victims. Viewers are 'brain-washed' by the perpetual scenes of violence to such an extent that violence and aggressiveness becomes accepted as a mode of behaviour.

Television Encourages Imitation of Crime

Research has established that TV exercises a very strong influence on the minds of people causig them to imitate and enact the crime shown on the TV screen. Dr. Robert Liebert, a child psychologist who was a leading researcher in the United States Surgeon General's investigation into TV and social behaviour, says: Violence on home screens encourages 'an acceptance of aggression as a mode of behaviour...Perfectly normal children will imitate anti-social behaviour they see on television, not out of malice, but curiousity...In showing displays of violence and crinimal acts, the media is 'teaching', people are 'learning', he says.

The Brainwashing Action of Television

Television is here and its biggest fans are children. Overnight they've become instant pundits, immediately recognizing personalities who are still just faces to the rest of us.

It's the kids who grab the TV guide and plot their viewing with military precision; the kids who know every cop and cowboy and exactly why it could not have been the butler who did it.

Will reading become a forgotten art only necessary to decipher the basic English of the TV guide or the secret message flashed on the screen by Agent X who has seconds to read the scrawl before it self-destructs? Researchers have established that the young minds of children are readily susceptible to being brainwashed by TV. In America organizations have been formed in scores of cities in order to tight the evil effect of TV on children. The President of the Organization , Action For Children's Television, a Boston-based parents' organization with branches in 60 cities says:

"At present from Monday to Friday, children are subjected to 16 minutes of commercials an hour, and 12 minutes an hour on weekends."

"Television advertisers in America are pouring unprecedented millions of dollars into the child slots for the autumn season, despite a storm of public indignation over 'brainwashing' on children's shows."

Television Stunts Intellectual Growth

An eminent American elocutionist, Professor Lowell Little, claims that TV raises ignorant students. At an education seminar in Florida he said:

"Today's youth are so used to plopping down in front of a television set and not having to put their brains to work that when they come to sit in a classroom of a university all they are capable of doing is day-dreaming and vacantly watching the clock." "

As the first generation of youngsters all but raised on television has now reached college age it is abundantly clear that the boob tube (i.e. television) has destroyed any curiosity they may ever have had."

"Their level of communication is just at the sixth grade level." "The television has more influence on them than parents, teachers or clergy -- and that is a disgrace." "If I get through to four students out of 30 and arouse their interest that's the best I can expect."

The Addictive Influence of Television

The addictive influence of TV over its viewers is a serious malady which has reached alarming proportions. Viewers become so addicted to TV that it becomes most difficult for most viewers to live without TV. Research in this field of the 'addictive influence of TV' has established that if these who are addicted to TV are deprived of television they become increasingly nervous, short-tempered and unhappy.

In an article captioned: Millions Addicted To The Box, the Eastern Province Herald of tile 23rd October, 1975, reports:

"Television's addictive grip was emphasized some months before when three socially varied 'guinea pig' families agreed to try a switch-off for a month. The lowest income family could stand the deprivation only a week; the other two lasted for four weeks, hating every minute of it. They said they felt as if they had lost a friend, were depressed and thought their work was suffering too."

"ln an earlier psychological experiment 182 West Germans volunteered to try to give up television for a year, with the inducement of payment as long as they kept off. One brave family stood the strain for nearly six months - till they wanted to watch a crime serial. The first volunteer, a bachelor; failed after three weeks. Others became increasingly nervous, short-tempered and unhappy..."

Television diverts man's attention from the remembrance of Allaah. The Prophet (may blessings of Allaah and peace be upon him) said:

"Every sport or amusement that a Muslim occupies himself with is Baatil (baseless, null and not permissible) -- except three: (the three types beings his practicing with your bow (and arrow); his training horse and his playing with his family." (Ibn Maajah. It was declared authentic by al-Albaanee in Saheeh Sunan Ibn Maajah 2/132. no. 2267 [2811]. See also Silsilah Saheehah 1/562, no. 315)

Allaah Ta'ala says in the Qur'aan:

"The life of this world is but play and amusement, and the abode of the Hereafter is best for those who Fear (Allaah). " (Al Qur'aan 6:32)

The above stated Hadith and verse of the Qur'aan. as well as many other the Qur'aan and Ahadith make it quite clear that Islaam does not tolerate futility, idle sport and amusement. This is so because amusement and entertainment divert one's attention from the Remembrance of Allaah Ta'ala. It also interferes with one's worship causing neglect of Salaat (in general) and the congregational prayers (particularly for the men). Amusement and entertainment which Islaam describes as Lawh, la'b make a person indolent, negligent and irresponsible. Hence, we find the Messenger of Allaah (blessings of Allaah and peace be upon him) condemning very strongly even such play as chess and backgammon, etc., in the following hadith: *"Whosoever plays with chess and backgammon is like one who has dyed his hands with the flesh and blood of swine."* (Muslim 4/1222 no. 5612)

Research on Television has shown...

Research studies on the effects and influence of television on society has shown:

- That the average American child stares at more than 11 000 murders on television by the age of 14.
- That most American children spend more time before a set than with their teacher in any one year.
- That in a national survey many young viewers claimed to watch television for up to 46 hours a week.
- That Television takes one away from reality.

- That TV has created a avast tribe of mini-stars, pop-idols, schmaltzy gurus, talking-heads, telegogues and cardboard 'personalities' whose only achievement is to be on the box.
- That TV causes lethargy in children.
- That Television is responsible for the falling standard of literacy.
- That millions of dollars are spent by advertisers to 'brainwash' children by means of television to increase demand for consumer goods.
- That Television makes viewers insensitive to violence Numerated by others.
- That public apathy and failure to respond to a victim's cries for help is blamed on Television.
- That Television is detrimental to the physical and mental health of children...

What They Say About Television

"The Church of England General Synod, in a report to a Government appointed committee deplores scenes of heavy drinking, chain smoking and casual use of obscene language and blasphemous language on TV." (Eastern Province Herald, 23rd October, 1975)

The psychiatrists, Dr. William Tompkins of the George Washington School of Medicine, and Dr. Paul Fink of the East Virginia Medical School, have been engaged in intensive research into the effect on people if television advertising. They say that TV commercials "encourage belief in mysticism by making viewers believe they can get what they want almost by magic."

Dr. Tompkins says: "Television advertising gets us to accept nonsense and leads us to go looking for a fantasy world. "

"...the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) was ticked of by the House and Senate Appropriation Committee and told to report on fresh measures to curb video violence or face 'punitive action '. "

Mr. Tindall, Director of the Audio-visual Center of Sydney Teachers' College said: "Children were learning that violence is not only rampant but frequently justified."

"For years, people had been saying the good thing about TV was that it brought news to the living room. But the survey indicated that few children, if given the option, watched the news or current affairs."

"An almost unbelievable avalanche of sex, perversion, pornography, blue films, sadism, masochism, bestiality, murder, rape and brutality has flooded into the

public view through the modern 'boob tube' of television, or the movies and lurid novels."

"In British television, almost unbelievable references to lewdness, perverted sex and depravity are as open and unabashed as news reports." (Tomorrow's World, August 1971)

Television and Time

Television undoubtedly dominates the free time or leisure of millions who have become addicted to it. Hours of precious time are daily squandered in the presence of the 'I'V set. This malady of wasting hours daily doing 'justice to the TV screen' is so serious that even necessary and important work and activities are neglected, especially when the 'I'V program or serial clashes with the time when a particular work has to be done. The Eastern Province Herald dated 23rd October 1975, states in a report:

"Britons spend more time with television than with radio, books, theater and newspaper combined."

"The average person watches television nine hours and six minutes a week in winter and seven hours 42 minutes in summer but these estimates seem conservative."

"Three-quarters of homes in one British Midlands industrial area found to have the 'telly' on the entire evening everyday and in one national survey many young viewers claimed to watch for up to 46 hours a week."

"When early in 1974 the Government put 10:30p.m. curfew on television to save electricity for several weeks the outcries were loud and long."

A recent survey conducted by the Audio-visual Center of Sydney Teachers' College (Australia) revealed that the average child watched over 21 hours of TV a week. Mr. Tindall, Director of the Center asked: "What does TV offer the child in exchange for about 1100 hours of almost undivided attention each year?"
Time in lslam is of great importance. So important indeed is Time that Almighty Allaah in the Qur'aan takes an Oath by Time, and says: "Wal-Asri" -- By the Token of Time.

A Muslim is not permitted to waste time, more so. when the wasting of time is a result of an institution portraying vice and evil, and when the wasting of time on a practice or 'past-time' involves interference or neglect with ones duties to Allaah and man. The addictive grip of television over its viewers is so powerful that the viewer becomes a helpless victim wasting sacred hours glued to the TV screen, thus neglecting his Salaat, his family duties and his social duties. The student, undoubtedly neglects his studies and learning. In a survey, teachers

have said that a direct link exists between television and the failing standard of literacy, particularly among lethargic children continually sitting up late in front of the "goggle box".

"By the Time, Verily! Man if in loss, Except those who believe (in Islaam) and do righteous good deeds, and recommend one another to the truth, and recommend one another to patience." (Al-Qur'aan 103)

Should anyone be watching television?